

## REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 9-11. Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1-4 and 6 stand rejected under §102 on the basis of Yukawa EP '025, and claims 1-8 stand rejected under §103 on the basis of Yukawa. Claim 1 has been amended to overcome these rejections, by providing that the elastic fixing band is retained on the inner surface of the tread through elastic force. In addition, new claim 12, which is similar to original claim 1, provides that the elastic fixing band is fixed by a bond along the outer surface of the band-shaped sound absorbing material, and is also retained on the tread through elastic force. Support for these features is found in paragraphs 24, 29, and 46 of the present specification, and in Figs. 2a and 2b.

Band-shaped sound absorbing materials for tires are typically made of porous material. If the sound absorbing material is bonded to the inner surface of the tread portion solely through the use of a bond, it is difficult to obtain a stable state of joining. This problem is addressed and solved in the present invention, by attaching the band-shaped sound absorbing material to the inner surface of the tread portion under pressure, through the elastic force of the elastic fixing band, as in amended claim 1, or through the bond and elastic force of the elastic fixing band, as in new claim 12.

Yukawa does not teach that the band-shaped sound absorbing material is fixed to the inner surface of the tread portion under pressure by use of the “elastic fixing band”, with or without the bond between the sound absorbing material and the elastic fixing band.

Since Yukawa does not use such an elastic fixing band, but instead, fixes the band-shaped sound absorbing material to the inner surface of the tire only by use of a bond, stable affixation is not realized, while it is realized according to the present invention. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

For all the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner should contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,  
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